



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington – Chair
Councillor Cassidy – Vice Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Porter

Councillor Bonham
Councillor Osman

* * * * *

151. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rae Bhatia
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Clarke, Cllr Bajaj substituted.

152. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

153. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Those who were present at the previous meeting agreed the minutes to be correct.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 23 April 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

154. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2025/26

The Membership of the Commission was confirmed as follows:

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Cassidy (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Bonham
Councillor Clarke
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Osman
Councillor Porter

155. DATES OF MEETINGS FOR THE COMMISSION 2025/26

The dates of the meetings for the Commission were confirmed as follows:

25 June 2025
27 August 2025
5 November 2025
14 January 2026
11 March 2026
22 April 2026

156. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Commission noted the Scrutiny Terms of Reference.

157. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

158. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The following question was presented to the commission by Dr Spowage:

Why are there no automatic bollards on the Granby Street Pedestrian and Cycle Zone that is between Northampton Street and St Georges Way?

The bollards are on the plans that were presented to this committee on 13th October 2021 (available in the public reports pack, p.107) and are a part of the tender, and therefore I expect that money will have been allocated for them.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership delivery plan for 2022/2023, published on 7th December 2022, notes that the Granby Street scheme is now complete (p.8).

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Annual Update, published on 7th December 2022, talks of the Granby Street regeneration project as if it were complete (p.4).

However, the automatic bollards have not been installed and I cannot find any public reference to their omission. I have highlighted this issue multiple times on the Love Leicester portal but there has been no tangible improvement. In fact, the situation has been getting worse. This Pedestrian and Cycle Zone is used as a cruising strip by motorists. I have observed and documented up to seventeen vehicles at a time illegally parked and illegally driving along this section of Granby Street. This happens every day, at all times of the day and night. The Civil Enforcement Officers are overwhelmed. There are often so many motor vehicles that the whole street becomes blocked; usually by large SUVs, taxis and luxury track cars. As a cyclist, I have suffered three near misses with motorists on this section of Granby Street, and have witnessed a number of close calls between other cyclists and motorists, and between pedestrians and motorists. It feels like, and I believe this is an incredibly unsafe and unpleasant place for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Chair thanked Dr Spowage for the question and invited an officer to respond.

The Director of Planning – Development Transportation responded noting the following:

- The issues highlighted were known issues.
- The bollard installation was in the pipeline, and this was to be reflected during the current meeting.
- Subject to the programme approval, the bollards should be installed at the Granby Street section and would be similar in nature to the ones already placed with the central area of the city.

In response to a supplementary question from Dr Spowage on whether it would still be the case that plans included bollards at both ends of the section, the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation responded that:

- He would consider Dr Spowage's thoughts and would come back to him.
- The bollard position had not yet been finalised and Dr Spowage's input was welcomed.

In response to a further supplementary question from Dr Spowage regarding timescale and whether there was any reasoning behind the delay on bollards in this section compared to the rest of the city, the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation responded:

- The Council had been working closely with the police to prioritise appropriately.
- For the second phase it was necessary to consult and engage with

interested parties.

- It was hoped for the Granby Street Pedestrian and Cycle Zone bollards to be installed either later this year or by early 2026.

The following question was presented to the commission by Dr Patel and taken as read, with the questioner not being in attendance:

Having a look at the new parking signs around the city I have noticed that the 'Monday-Sat' or 'Monday -Fri' are missing. I am assuming this now means that street parking fees now apply 7 days a week. This was not included in the executive decision report in March 2025. Can the responsible person/City Mayor please address the following questions;

- 1. Why was this change not clearly stated or highlighted in the relevant Executive Decision report?*
- 2. Do parking charges still apply on bank holidays?*
- 3. Can the signs be changed back so there are no parking charges on Sunday?*

The Chair invited an officer to respond. The City Highways Director responded as follows:

The application of parking fees to Sundays and Bank Holidays was discussed by the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission on 23rd April 2025 following the “call-in” of the Executive Decision dated 25th March 2025 to increase parking fees and charges.

- 1. Why was this change not clearly stated or highlighted in the relevant Executive Decision report?*

The Executive Decision to introduce charges for on-street parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays was taken on 7th November 2022. The decision report was published on the Leicester City Council website. Paragraph 5.4 of the Executive Decision Report stated that “these proposals are predominantly an alteration to the existing fees and charges and include proposals to charge the standard rates for parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays at car parks and on-street locations”. The Decision was open to being ‘called-in’, but this was not taken up.

The implementation of the changes was subject to a number of activities before it could be applied, which included carrying out the statutory Traffic Regulation Order Consultation process required to change the parking orders to include for the application of parking fees on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The timing of the implementation was also linked to the roll out of the “Pay by Phone” option for payment of parking fees due to the changes required to the statutory signage on-street.

The proposals to amend the Traffic Regulation Order were formally advertised on-street and in the *Leicester Mercury* on 8th June 2023.

The proposals to charge for on-street parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays would: -

- i) Ensure turnover of on-street parking spaces within the City

- Centre, addressing all-day commuter parking on Sundays in support of short stay retail and visitor parking.
- ii) Help with meeting the operational running costs for managing parking and enforcement services in the city on Sundays and Bank Holidays, and supporting highway and transport improvements more generally.
 - iii) Bring on-street parking charging in line with off-street car parks where payment for parking on Sundays is normal practice.
 - iv) Disabled Blue Badge holders will still be able to park for free.

After careful consideration of objections received to the proposals, advertised as part of the Traffic Regulation or the section consultation process, the decision to implement the changes was confirmed on 16th April 2024. The new Traffic Regulation Order came into force on 2nd June 2025.

2. Do parking charges still apply on bank holidays?

The parking charges applied on all days of the week, including Bank Holidays.

3. Can the signs be changed back so there are no parking charges on Sunday?

The rationale for introducing charges for parking on Sundays and Bank Holidays was set out in the Executive Decision report dated 7th November 2022 and there were no current plans to review this again, it was discussed at the last scrutiny commission before the changes were implemented.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his response and invited questions and comments from the commission. Key points to note were as follows:

- A report was scheduled on the scrutiny work programme, which would update the commission on outcomes since the parking charge changes had come into effect. It was too early at present to observe outcomes.
- The Chair noted that she had raised an issue with the Parking Enforcement Team where a member of the public had been confused by the signage on Sunday parking.

AGREED:

- 1) For a liaison with Dr Spowage over the siting of the Granby Street Pedestrian and Cycle Zone bollards.
- 2) For a response to be passed on to Dr Patel

159. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

160. OVERVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY.

The Director Planning of Development and Transportation and Director for

Tourism, Culture and Economy gave a presentation using the slides attached to the agenda. This provided an overview of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission, giving a reminder of the services sitting within the commission. Additional points to note included:

- An unsuccessful procurement exercise had taken place for the train station, and a second procurement exercise is being progressed following review. It was anticipated that this would be taken back to market in the next few months.
- Figures on the annual maintenance costs for the city bus stations would be circulated to the commission.
- An offer to tour the Waterside development had not been taken up yet by the commission, the invite remained open.
- There had been several successful bids to secure funding from central government over previous years. Projects such as Canopy, Dock and the LCB Depot had all been created largely out of these funds.
- Newly available property and land was usually taken up by businesses very quickly
- Current government funding was typically directed towards housing or transport, so opportunities had now reduced. The Industrial Strategy had been published recently so prospects were being explored. There could be potential to work with the private sector.
- Each asset disposal had a level of certainty with external advice taken from qualified valuers. A report would come to scrutiny on the disposal of general assets.

The Director of Tourism; Culture & Economy provided an overview of his division, noting the following:

- The construction of the new business workspace Canopy (the redeveloped Pilot House) was complete, and was now at the fit out stage. The building was anticipated to open in early September, and would include a new café. The workspace was already 38% pre-let. The name 'Canopy' had been developed with branding consultants to reflect the architecture of the building and the creation of a protective and welcoming space for businesses.
Market rents had been set at a good level and it was estimated that when Canopy was fully occupied in several years this would contribute to the revenue surplus generated by the workspace portfolio and was already factored in to financial planning for the Council.
- Sector training facilities, such as the Construction Hub at Bishopdale in Beaumont Leys supported individuals from disadvantaged communities.
- A high-profile Apprentice Graduation ceremony was due to take place shortly with an anticipated attendance of around 150-200 apprentice graduates.
- The commission would remain updated on timescales for the market place development. A planning application for works on the public realm, in front of the Corn Exchange, had been submitted. Work on the design of the development on the market structure in front of the exchange was

ongoing.

- A high profile event showcasing Leicester's fashion and textiles sector, organised by Fashion Enter, had been delivered at Athena on 14th May 2025 with 65 local manufacturers exhibiting. This had drawn an attendance of over 1000 people with industry speakers and specialists engaging with that event including local MP, Liz Kendall. Events like these were important to support the core of local manufacturing businesses in the sector, protecting jobs for local communities.
- A Creative and Cultural strategy had just been launched for the city which would support the growth and development of this key sector. One element was recognising that there are opportunities to raise the profile of the Leicester's creative and cultural economy, and an online platform was about to be launched to do this.
- Regarding the new supported employment programme Connect to Work working across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland, the Department of Work and Pensions were specific about what funding should be spent on. The aim was for job coaches to work with individuals for up to 12 months to help them to find and stay in work. 75% of the programme was required to be delivered in health settings and would be commissioned out to specialist providers.
- The Get Britain Working Plan will see the development of a partnership strategy to understand and address issues around the labour market, and specifically how to address high levels of economic inactivity. This work has started to look at how a range of organisations support pathways into employment. More information could come to the commission at a later date to review progress of these initiatives.

AGREED:

- 1) For figures on the bus station running costs to be circulated to the commission.
- 2) For the item on Workspaces Funding (Dock and Canopy) to come to Commission.
- 3) That the commission note the presentation.
- 4) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

161. LOCAL TRANSPORT FUNDING

The City Transport Director presented the reports attached to the agenda. These were to be taken in tandem to provide members of the commission with details of the government grants made available for transport improvements in the 25/26 financial year, and to advise members of the commission of the projects and programmes these grants will allow us to deliver or support. Key points to note were as follows:

- The vast majority of funding available to the service came via

Government grants. Bids had not always come to fruition, but Leicester did tend to have more success than other local authorities. The government had announced that they were intending to move away from this method, towards an allocation approach.

- £21.9m of additional grants have been made available to the authority for this financial year. This was across the Active Travel fund, the Local Transport Grant, the Bus Service Improvement plan, the Consolidated Active Travel Fund, the Local Transport Resource Grant and the Bus Service Operators Grant.
- The Local Transport Grant was only initially available, for this financial year, to local authorities in the North and the Midlands. The primary restrictions were that the grant cannot be spent on heavy rail, or on the strategic road network.
- The Consolidated Active Travel Fund would allow continuation of work including promoting safe access to school.
- All grants mentioned must be spent by the end of the financial year, apart from the Consolidated Active Travel Fund which must be spent by March 2027, but projects must be on site by March 2026.
- The Consolidated Active Travel Fund would allow for preparation and delivery of Rally Park phase 2 which included extending the project across the bridge at Fosse Road North, enabling connections into the new school sites.

The Chair thanked The City Transport Director for the presentation and welcome questions and comments from the commission. Key points to note were as follows:

- Regarding spending, the announcement of funding had come relatively late, time was of the essence and works were being prioritised to achieve best success. Conversations on timeframe flexibility could take place with central government.
- In response to a question, it was noted that the report of Rally Park running costs had also included aspects such as lighting and vegetation and were not only reflecting the costing of the new path and cycleways.
- Confidence had grown in the ability to retain staff.
- Suitable projects that were quicker to complete were at the forefront of planning.
- Illuminated street signage required considerable consultation and designing, and also entailed maintenance and running costs. Street sign legislation dictated the lighting put in place.
- Proposals on the work to take place on Aylestone Road would be circulated to members.
- The 20 mph scheme was limited by resource but the potential would be explored for this to be expedited.
- The Local Transport funding would remain in place up until 2030, absolute confirmation was awaited from the Department of Transport. Further details were expected to come in the Autumn for travel planning. It was then hoped that a programme spanning multiple years could be developed, rather than creating annual programmes.

- Members were invited to give their views on establishing the local neighbourhood improvement plan. The current plan was to maximise by joining into programmes that had already delivering, this would reduce overall costs.
- The 10 highest priority pedestrian crossings had been brought forward to ward briefings as the prioritisation programme. An analysis tool developed with Active Travel England had ensured maximum investment. Details of this could be shared with the commission.
- External consultants were not usually brought in, unless there was a specifically required skill set that they could bring.
- Funding benchmarking with other local authorities was problematic due to centre government changes to funding allocation. It remained to be seen how Leicester fared but certainly the indicators were that Leicester was not disadvantaged.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.
- 3) For a breakdown of Rally Park costings to be shared with the commission.
- 4) A copy of the proposals for road resurfacing on Aylestone Road would be circulated.
- 5) Details of 10 highest priority crossings to be shared.
- 6) Progress reports to come to the Commission.

162. 25/26 BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN GRANT

The City Transport Director submitted a report to provide details of the Department for Transport 25/26 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to members of the commission and to outline the intended approach for the deployment of funds related to BSIP and BSOG.

Key points included:

- The grant process had been competitive.
- The Council was part of the Leicester Buses Enhanced Partnership.
- The funding for the Improvement Plan must be spent on projects within the published Bus Service Improvement Plan, that were previously agreed and approved by the Department for transport (DfT), and projects that promoted bus use for residents and visitors to the city.
- Procuring buses or routes at short notice resulted in very high costs, especially when only operating for a short period of time. This hampers direct investment, and restricted how the authority can invest the funding.
- Another difficulty had been that capital schemes such as bus priority

required extensive design, modelling, engagement and consultation.

- Priorities for the programme therefore included:
 - Areas where there is opportunity to obtain private sector investment.
 - Projects that were deemed deliverable against the March 2026 deadline.
 - Opportunities which could benefit revenue-saving and passenger growth.
 - Areas where future withdrawal of funding would not be disruptive or damaging.
 - Areas which will improve the network and the accessibility of the network, and where research showed that investment could lead to long-term sustained passenger growth.
- It was proposed that the programme:
 - Operated a grant scheme for purchasing electric busses, similar to the DfT Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme.
 - Continued the same level of support for the Hop! service and the Park and Ride service.
 - Maintained real-time information.
 - Supported Greenline routes.
 - Provided branding, marketing and promotional work across the Leicester flexi area.
 - Provided additional printed timetable information at certain bus stops.
 - Supported the development of future programmes.
 - Supported staff resource required for delivery of services.
- The programme allowed for the potential of up to £23m in investment, including match funding from bus operators.
- Future funding was dependent on hitting deadlines, so it was important to get the scheme up and running.

The Commission were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- In response to questions about whether subsidies lead to passenger growth, it was stated that the market was there in terms of discounting fares and running on certain routes, however, services needed to cater for the market and the need of travel in terms of journey times. Research maximised the opportunity to continue services and services would receive newer electric buses, which had faster acceleration and were more comfortable, which has led to people changing their travel habits.
- This was only a 1-year programme, so investment would only be made in what would yield long-term benefits.
- In response to a query about whether services in Thurncourt ward could be established as part of the scheme, it was explained that new drivers would need to be recruited and new buses purchased, this would mean a heavy cost premium. Therefore, new services were not considered directly as part of this funding. However, if multi-year funding was secured, then this could be considered.

- The scheme would support the Hop! Service, the Hospital Hopper service and the Park and Ride system.
- In response to a request that the Park and Ride service stop at Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI), it was noted that the 203 stopped at LRI and the 103 stopped nearby at St Nicholas Circle. There was also a long-term ambition for the Park and Ride service to serve employment hubs in the city.
- The funding deadline was nine months away, so there was not much time to develop proposals, but more could be taken on if multi-year funding was secured.
- In response to a request for the expansion of real-time information, it was noted that this was being considered. The contract for maintenance of real-time information was being renegotiated and this would take the majority of the year, however, from next year onwards the real-time information could be expanded.
- It was noted that there was a rolling programme across the city to improve bus stops, particularly in terms of where they needed to be and whether services could continue operating to and from them. Work was being conducted with operators on where the core routes were and funding options for the future were being considered. A small number of sites would be looked at towards the end of the year as a proof of concept.
- In response to a query about the possibility of reducing fares for certain groups, it was noted that the Government's £3 cap would remain until 2027. It was further noted that blanket schemes had most likely benefitted existing bus users, but had not increased bus users. Subsidy schemes would therefore be reviewed as they came to an end to consider gaps in the market and tailoring fares to benefit people. Caution was advised as costs could outweigh benefits and it was noted that such plans could take many months of legal and contractual engagement, so it would be difficult to do this year.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account.

163. LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN - APPROACH TO INFORMAL SESSIONS.

The City Transport Director discussed with the Commission as to how they wished to approach informal scrutiny sessions on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Whilst there would be engagement at Ward level, the Commission could consider the plan more holistically.

It was suggested that it would be preferable to commence scrutiny in July due to funding limitations.

It was suggested that 'walking buses' could be considered as part of the scrutiny.

AGREED:

That an online session be convened for members of the Commission to consider the plan.

164. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

The work programme was noted.

165. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 19:20.